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Message Text

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43
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /081 W
---------- 065895
R 301350Z OCT 75
FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9307
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

UNCLAS HELSINKI 2339

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGSC ELAB, PINT, FI
SUBJECT: METAL WORKERS' ELECTIONS: THE VOTING PROCESS

1. SUMMARY: THE INCREASINGLY BITTER STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF THE FINNISH METALWORKERS' UNION IS DRAWING TO A CLOSE. THE ELECTIONS ARE NOVEMBER 2-4. THIS TELEGRAM OUTLINES THE COMPLICATED PROCESS TO SELECT THE 506 DELEGATES TO CONVENTION THAT WILL MEET DECMEBER 14 TO SET THE COURSE OF FINLAND'S LARTEST TRADE UNION FOR THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. THE MAIN BATTLE IS BETWEEN THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE COMMUNISTS, BUT FINLAND'S AGRICULTURALLY-BASED CENTER PARTY IS ALSO A SERIOUS COMPETITOR IN SOME DISTRICTS AND COULD FIND ITSELF IN A BALANCING POSITION WHEN THE BALLOTS ARE COUNTED. LATEST DEVELOPMENTS AND ANALYSIS SUBJECT SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

2. THE THE 1971 METALWORKERS' ELECTION 63 PERCENT OF THE ELIGIBEL MEMBERS CAST 72,000 VOTES AND THE SOCIAL
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DEMOCRATS EDGED THE COMMUNISTS BY A MARGIN OF SLIGHTLY

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MORE THAN 4,000 VOTES . IN PERCENTAGE TERMS THE SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS RECEIVED 53.6, THE COMMUNISTS 46.2 AND THE
CENTER 0/2. OF THE 465 DELGATE SEATS 248 WENT TO THE
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, 215 TO THE COMMUNISTS AND 2 TO CENTE
PARTY REPRESENTATIVES.

3. THE 1975 ELECTIONS WILL BE CONDUCTED ON THE SAME
PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION BASIS AS THE 1971 ELECTIONS.
THE BULD OF UNION MEMBERS (123,400 OR 83 PERCENT) VOTE
IN 14 REGIONAL DISTRICTS RANGING IN SIZE FROM SOUT
TURKU WITH ITS 18,700 MEMBERS AND 63 DELGATE SEATS TO
LAPLAND WITH 1/200 EMMBERS AND 4 DELEGATES.THE REMAIN-
ING 25,100 MEMBERS VOTE IN 7 NATIONWIDE ELECTION DISTRICTS.
BY FAR THE LARGEST OF THESE IS THE AUTO REPAIR SHOP
WORKERS AND GARAGE MECHANICS. THE OTHERS ARE TELEPHONE
LINEMENT, MINEWORKERS, WOOD INDUSTRY REPAIRMEN, SHEET
METAL WORKERS, PRECIOUS METAL WORKERS, AND POWER STATION
ELCTRICIANS. THE REGIONAL DISTRICTS ACCOUNT FOR 418
OF THE 506 DELEGATE SEATS WITH THE REMAINING 88 DIVIDED
AMONG THE NATIONAL DISTRICTS. EACH ELECTION ALLIANCE
IS ALLOWED TO NOMINATE TNE MORE CNDIDATES THAN THERE
ARE SEATS IN A DISTRICT. THE COMMUNISTS AND SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS HAVE FULL SLATES IN ALMOST EVERY DISTRICT.
THE CENTER PARTY HAS ABBREVIATED LISTS IN 7 OF THE 21
DISTRICTS WHILE THE SOCIALIST WORKERS' PARTY (STP) HAS ITS
OWN LIST IN ONE DISTRICT (ELSEWHERE ITS FEW CANDIDATES
ARE INCLUDED IN COMMUNIST LIST). THE VARIOUS LISTS
ARE NOT LABELLED BY PARTY BUT DESIGNATED BY LETTERS
DRAWN BY LOT. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS RUN ON LIST "A",
THE COMMUNISTS ON LIST "B."

4.THE VOTING PERCENTAGE WILL HAVE A CONSIDERABLE
AFFCT IN THE FINAL RESULTS. SEVENTY PERCENT IS
CONSIDERED THE DIVIDING LINE. IF TURNOUT IS BELOW THAT
LEVEL COMMUNISTS ARE LIKELY TO WIN ABSOLUTE JAMORITY.
OVER 75 PERCENT WOULD ALMOST ENSURE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC
VICTORY. SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE FROM 1971 PRACTICE
THAT THIS YEAR VOTING WILL TAKE PLACE AT WORKPLACES
AS WELL AS AT SPECIAL POLLING STATIONS ANOTHER STIMULUS
TO HIGH VOTER TURNOUT MAY BE TREMENDOUS PUBLICITY
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GENERATED BY RECENT CHARGES OF SECRET FUNDING FOR
SOCIAL DEMOCRATS, WHICH COULD ACTUALLY WORK IN
THEIR FAVOR.

5. CENTER PARTY CANDIDATES ARE EXPECTED TO WIN 5 TO
9 SEATS AND IN CLOSE ELECTION COULD BE BALANCING
FORCE. ALTHOUGH CENTER CANDIDATES HAVE MADE IT CLEAR
THEYWOULD CHOOSE "LESSER EVIL" AND SUPPORT SOCIAL

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DEMOCRATS FOR UNION LEADERSHIP,SUCH A SITUATION WOULD
MAKE LABOR MARKET LESS STABLE AND WOULD BE SEROUS
BLOW TO SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY MORALE.
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